CHAPTER I.

It was toward the close of a dark, serry, sombre autumn day that I, together with the messenger who had remmoned me, arrived in sight of the boase in which my services as a physician were required. The only way of approach to the mansion lay across a lake. My guide unfastened the chain of a small boat which slept among the sedges at our feet, and, having taken my mat in the prow, we pushed off into the dark water. The shore receded and the two great hills from which we had descended. Before us lay the mansion, backed by still loftier mountains, the peaks of which rose far into the sky. Who could support, day after day and sesson after season, the lifeless lustre of that inky lake, the unchangeable oppression of those overwatching hills? Certainly no common person.

"Certainly no common person." As I repeated these words to myself the boat touched the fungus-tinted granite of the steps ascending to the

ranite of the steps ascending to the archway of the door. Another service appeared at the entrance, who, taking my bag and wrapper, preceded me into a dusky hall, where the light which entered through the deepset pointed windows was barely sufficient to reveal the rich oaken carving of the walls and ceiling, the ancient and faded tapestries which veiled the doorways, and the spectral gleaming of suspended arms. Nothing here seemed to have been disturbed for ages. Not a sign of modern life was visible. The dust of centuries blackened the rafters.

The scent of antiquity was in the air.
Thence I was conducted through
many narrow, shadowy, and winding
corridors to a small chamber at the
other end of the building. This room was furnished in a more recent style, and, indeed, except for the scarcity of light occasioned by the same pointed and narrow windows which I had before observed, might have been called a comfortable apartment. The floor and ceiling were, indeed, of the same black oak as before; an antique lamp hung from the roof by a long chain; the floor was screened by a curtain of tarnished tapestry; so much was ancient, mediaval. But the walls were surded with shelves and stored with books, papers and writing materials lay on the table, and an easy-chair stood invitingly beside a cheerful fire. The

room was empty.
"My master will be with you imme diately, sir," said the servant. With this announcement he retired, and I was left alone.

As I now stood before the fire it struck me for the first time as a little remarkable that I did not even know my patient's name. I had been sum-moned on this errand by mere chance. my door-plate having happened to be the first to catch the eye of the messenger. I was a new arrival in the neighborhood and knew little of the residents. Of this remote and singular dwelling I had never so much as heard. I looked round the room. Immediately my attention became arrested and my interest awakened-Whatever sort of person might turn out was evident that he had one passion in common with myself. On the table stood a chess-board, with a game half played. Beside the board lay a note-book, in which seemed to be pencilled remarks on the position. I approached the book-shelves. One whole shelf—some dozens of volumes—contained solely works referring to the

the world; bulky scrap-books filled with cuttings of problems, games, and annotations. Several of the volumes rarest kind, such as I had never hoped to set my eyes on. And I, too, was a virtuoso, and a poor one. at least I envied the fortunate posses of these treasures with all my heart?
I had, however, little time to moral-

game, from the largest German hand-

buch to the thinnest pamphlet; transac-

ize upon this villainy of fortune. My reflections were cut short by the opening of the door. I turned, and myself face to face with the object of

in silence, and with mutual surprise. I saw before me a man somewhat past the prime of life, with a face which not but be called beautiful even in its extreme fragility and pallor. I have said that he appeared to be some what past the prime of life; but his true age would have been difficult to determine. One who had looked only at his face, and at his strangely bright. yet tintless eyes, would have pronounced him young; yet his hair was the hair of a very old man, being as white as

snow or ashes.

The surprise with which I regarded him, however, arose not from his appearance, but from a strange discovery which I made as my eyes fell on his person. Long though it was since I had seen them last, these peculiarities of face and figure were perfectly familiar to me. It was impossible that

I could be mistaken.
"Philip—Philip Froissart!" I
ejaculated at last, recovering a little

from my astonishment.
"What," he answered on his side, "Paul Seldon!" And thereupon we clasped hands with all the cordiality of an old regard.

Strange and unexpected meeting!
Five-and-twenty years—the quarter of a century—had passed since I and Philip Froissart had met. As undergraduates of the same college we had once been close and intimate friends, and I had known as much of Froissart as it was possible to know of a person of his peculiar nature. But from the time of our leaving the University time of our leaving the University our ways of life had drawn us far apart—me to walk a London hospital. Froissart to wander in luxurious idleness to all parts of the civilized world. The circumstances of our life had been wholly different. Each had been carried whelly different. Each has been away by separate billows of the great ocean; and thus it happened, as it often does happen in such cases, that though our friendship had never been broken, our friendship had never been broken, nor weakened, nor forgotten, we had passed out of each other's sight "like ships upon the sea." And now our paths had crossed again—how strangely. We sat down, and for some moments regarded each other in silence. Although I had not failed to recognize him at first sight, en thus observing

him at first sight, en thus observing aim with attention I found that years him with attention I found that years had not passed without leaving their mark on Froissart. The alteration was not so perceptible in his face or figure as in his voice and manner, which from having formerly been remarkable for their weighty calmness and self-possession now seemed nervous, restless, and

The appearance of illness—perhaps I should rather say of disquietude and agitation—in his face recalled to me the purpose for which I had been summoned. I inquired whether it was on his own account that he had sent for medical advice. He replied in the affirmative. What, then, were his symptoms? What did he sussect?

Broiseart answered me with clearness of precision. I gathered from his relies that he was suffering from disorted the nervous system, accompanied

over, lately had suspicion, from certain sensations in that organ, that his heart was affected. "I am not naturally a nervous subject," he added with a melarcholy smile, "but at present I am no better than an old woman, Paul. I fear you will find me quite a ruin, perhaps beyond the capacity of your art to restere."

I sent without delay for my bag, produced a stetheocope, and examined him carefully. I could find nothing wrong. On the contrary, all the important or-gans of the body were is sound condition. The nervousness, together with the resulting insomnia of which he spoke, proceeded, therefore, from some outer cause, which it now became my business to discover. The supposed affection of the heart was merely im-

aginary. " Froissart," I said, when I had fined, "I can only account for your state by supposing you to be subject to some secret cause of agitation of which you have not spoken. If such be the case, you haust not hide it, or I can do

As I said these words Froissart tarted and regarded me with agitation, but he was silent. The action was not lost on me. I did not think fit to increase his disturbance by pressing the question further, but I paused a moment so as to give him space to answer if he pleased. He understood my si-

"It is just," he said at length, "it is very just. I will not hide it. I have—I have a most strange story to tell you, Paul. And it is because it is so strange, so unaccountable, so in-credible, that I hesitate to tell it, lest you think me mad or dreaming."

He paused; the tone was peculiar. waited with much curiosity for him to continue. But my curiosity was doomed for the time to disappoint-

ment's hesitation, "not now. This is neither the time nor the place, and I am ashamed to have kept you here talking about my ailments when you must be dying of hunger. It is true that if be dying of hunger. It is true that if I lived like a hermit in a rock I could hardly be more solitary than I am, but my fare is somewhat better than an anchorite's, as I hope to show you.

I saw a lathe, a central long, a small long, a confusion of wood and iron materials, and a quantity of tools. But I did not see these only.

To my extreme surprise Froissart chorite's, as I hope to show you. Come." Froissart had not exaggerated when

he likened himself in solitude to a her-mit. His establishment, it appeared consisted of himself alone, together with a few domestics necessary for his requirements. Notwithstanding this, the linner to which we sat down was excellent; the wine was choice, and I secretly applauded Froisart's good sense and taste. I am no bon vivant, yet I confess I have much sympathy with the dictum of the great humorist, " I shrink instinctively from one who professes to like minced veal." I noticed, however, that Froissart him-self ate little, though he drank with less moderation—a sign from which I boded ill. I need not say that I observed him with attention—at least I need not say so to one of my profession. No lynx, no eagle has, nor needs to have, such eyes as a physician. And I was a phy-

As we dined our conversation, as might have been expected, turned upon each of us during the twenty years or more which had elapsed since we had parted. Froissart's life, as he related it, had, however, been a singularly uneventful one, while, at the same time, it had been essentially characteristic of me, he had fallen in with the owner of that house, and had accepted an invitation to pass a few days in his company. A strong community of the company of th his company. A strong community of tastes drew together host and guest; days flew by, and still Froissart lingered; days passed into weeks, weeks into months, months into years, and still he suited each other. Their days were oc-cupied in scientific investigations, in which both took much interest. Their evenings passed in playing chess, which game was in Sombras an engrossing ing, as if in a sort of fascination.

passion.

They had lived together uninterruptedly till three months ago, when old Martin Sombras suddenly died, leaving the house and the whole of his property. which was considerable, to his panion of so many years. Since that time Froissart had lived absolutely alone, nor had he even crossed the lake since the day on which he had seen his old friend carried to the grave-" That lake," he so expressed himself, " over which all worldly rumor flies as slowly and perishes as surely, as birds that wandered of old over the waters of

Aornis." my mind's eye. I saw again the gloomy water as it was when I had crossed it in the afternoon-black, impenetrable, stilled as night and death. The fancy struck me at the moment to ask Froissart the cause of the remarkable appearance of the water-so lustrous, yet so sombre.

"I suppose," I said, "the lake is

unusually deep?"
"Deep?"he repeated. "You are right; it is so. How deep I am unable to tell you. There is an old saying in the neighborhood that it reaches to the centre of the earth; and the legend, however absurd, shows that the ex-treme depth of the water has been long known. It is, I believe, an undoubted fact that the lake has never been

fathomed. Froissart rose from the table spoke and led the way back to the library, where our coffee was brought to us by a man-servant. Evening had to us by a man-servant. Evening had now closed in, and the burning fire and lighted lamp made the room look warm and comfortable. And yet I felt, without precisely knowing why, a curious uneasiness. Perhaps, scarcely recognized by myself, the recollection of the mystery of which Freissart had obscurely spoken centinued to haunt the immost recesses of my mind. haunt the inmost recesses of my mind. Froissart, however, made no further allusion to the subject, and I forbore to press him for an explanation, which might not perhaps be agreeable to his humer. He should choose his own time. We had arranged that I should stay with him for a day or two at least-perhaps longer; so that there was no occasion for haste.

It so happened, however, that this very evening was not to pass by without a beginning of those strange events which it has so singularly fallen to my lot to chronicle.

For something unusual, even start-

ling, I was, of course, to some extent forewarned by the sentences which Froissart had let fall. For what actually occurred, however, it is impossible that any mortal could have been

I have said that in spite of the warmth and comfort of the surroundings I was conscious of a sensation of uneasiness. It was, perhaps—or certainly—the steady growth of this sensation over me which at length prompted me to speak of it alond.

of it aloud.
"Froissart," I said, suddenly, after a long interval of silence, during which we had both become engrossed in our own thoughts, "the e is something about this old house of yours which makes me shiver. What is it? Have

ou not felt it? It is something shostly,

Jou not felt it? It is something and a sure."

I said these words, of course, merely in jest; but Froissart started, as if my voice had roused him from a reverie. His strange seitation returned; he grew paler than before, gazed at me with a most singular expression, and seemed about to speak; but, as before, after a moment's besitation, he remained silent. At the same time he glanced at the ancient timepiece which stood over the fireplace, as if suddenly reminded of something he had forgotten.

"Paul," he said, hurriedly, "I must leave you for a short time. I shall probably be back in a few minutes; but if I am detained you will not mind amusing yourself with a book, I know. I am exceedingly sorry to leave you even for a minute, but you will excuse me. I am sure." And murmuring apologies for leaving me alone, he hurried out of the room.

I was so much surprised at the strangeness and excitement of his man-

strangeness and excitement of his man-ner that for a moment I did nothing. Then I sprang from my seat and fol-lowed him. A sudden impulse resolved me to urge him to grant at once the confidence he had promised me, and not to endanger his health further with agitations which he was evidently in no condition to bear. My intervention, of course, might not be necessary. So much the better if it were not. But I

chose to be on the safe side.

When I gained the door Froissart was already at the end of the corridor; in a moment more I lost sight of him. Once or twice I stopped and listened; but I could now hear nothing. After what seemed to me an intermidable ascent, the stairs came out upon a broad landing on which two or three doors opened. From one of these, at the op-posite end of the landing to which I stood, a light shone; and now I could see that Froissart was there, and in the act of atriking a light

and kindling a lamp. I was about to advance when the lamp flamed up and the interior of the room became visible. It was of small dimensions, and seemed to be fitted up as a workshop. I saw a lathe, a bench, a small forge

was not alone. The room was already

tenanted.
In the middle of the chamber was small, low, square table, the top of which was fitted with a chessboard. The pieces, of red and white ivory, were drawn up as at the commence ment of a game. At this table a man was already sitting, with his side face turned toward me and rently fixed upon the board. His aspect was singular, not to say start-ling—it was that of a foreigner, of an Oriental. His dress consisted of a coiled turban, a long, loose, flowing robe, hanging sleeves, a crimson scarf and a jewelled collar. His complex ion appeared to be swarthy; he wore a long gray beard, and he sat before the table in a thoughtful attitude, his elbow resting on the arm of his chair.

I have said that I was surprisedstartled; so much it was natural that I should be. The unusual dress and nationality of the figure, especially strange in that place, was sufficient to account for such sensations. Yet neither word describes with exactness the nature of my feelings. My heart trembled in its seat, my blood was troubled in its current. It was as if the uneasy feeling Are there mysterious influences, not human, which make their presence felt like witchcraft, unintelligible to men?

What was near me?
Froissart, having lighted the lamp, took his seat at the table opposite the Oriental. His behavior surprised me and old Martin Sombras—an old bach-elor like himself—lived together in the much. Even from the distance at which solitary mansion. The life suited them I stood I could see that he was laboring his seat he looked tremulously toward the turbaned figure, and hastily moved

ing, as if in a sort of fascination.

The feeling of breathless expectance which seemed to possess him extended itself to me. I waited silently, even in trepidation, for what would happen

still Froissart sat thus, his eyes fixed intently, eagerly, upon the face before him. My surprise increased; I could not conceive why the other did not move his pawn in answer. The first moves in a game of chess are stereo typed and require no consideration. Yet the player continued to gaze fixedly at the board, apparently absorbed in

hought, and gave no sign of motion.

A hundred thoughts, surmises, perplexities, speculations, flitted through my brain, each more bewildering than the rest. How came this strange personage to be sitting here alone in the tower before Froissart came? What was the cause of Froissart's curious agitation? For what reason had he left me to play chess with this mysterious stranger? Wherefore did the stranger thus refuse to play? And wherefore-above all !-did I feel myself so chill, so shaken, as if I had be held a resurrection from the dead?

As I was vainly endeavoring to conecture what could be the explanation of these things—or, rather, not so much conjecturing as lost in a bewildering sense of their existence-Froissart changed his attitude. He rose, drew a deep breath, and prepared to extinguish the lamp. Had I been capable of feeling further surprise I think I should have felt it. Nothing had happened—nothing which explained the presence of the stranger, nothing which even suggested a motive for Froissart's visit to the tower—yet he was evidently coming away. As he stretched out his hand to take the lamp I advanced toward the door. He heard my step, and, turning round and seeing who it was, he came forward at once with the lamp in his hand, shutting and locking the door behind him.

"How did you find your way up here?" he said, in a voice which he strove, not altogether successfully, to render easy and unconcerned. "Have I been long gone?"

I told him; I explained without reserve the reasons which had induced me to follow him. He understood me; he pressed my hand in silence. We descended the stairs together.
"To-morrow," he said, "To-mor-

row I purpose to tell you all. To-night it is late and my story is a long one; nor do I feel at this moment either the courage or the humor. Did you see "dropping his voice to its lowest key-"did you see-" "I did," I answered, replying to his

look, "and I will ask you but one question, Froissart, perhaps a very strange one: Is that figure yonder—is

night. Froissart regarded me with a singular expression.
"I know not whether you will decide truthfully that question. Perhaps you would be justified in so thinking, though you would be wrong. Yet I

will snswer it. You asked me whether or not yonder figure is a living being, and I now teil you—that I do not

As he returned this strange reply his As he returned this strange reply his voice, his manner, thrilled me, I looked attentively at Froissart. His face was now composed, his voice steady, his eye clear and calm. I could perceive n him no trace of aberration or illusion. And yet his words were surely "wild and whirling" as those of nightmare, of frenzy, of delirium!

We separated for the night, but it was long before I retired to rest, and when at last I did so I lay awake for when at last I did so I lay water to hours, my brain busy with conjectural explanations of what I had seen and heard. No explanation, however, presented itself to my mind which I could accept as being in the least degree satisfactory. The only solution which seemed at all possible was that which had been present to my thoughts when I put

to Froissart the question which he had so strangely answered—that the figure I had seen was a machine, skillly constructed in human shape-in other words, an automaton. And yet how to reconcile his answer with this theory?—a theory which, moreover, after all, explained nothing, neither Froissart's agitation nor the motive of his visit to his tower, nor his behavior in the presence of the figure, nor his inexplicable answer, nor my own sensaions. No; this solution would not erve. Yet I could think of no other which did not seem still wilder and more fantastic. At length I gave up despair the attempt to find an explation of the mystery, and weary of vain

onjectures I fell asleep.

In the morning I rose, and we descended to the room in which we had dined the night before, and where the morning meal awaited us. Somewhat to my surprise, and much to my disappointment, Froissart made no referce to the events of the preceding night, nor to his promise of revela-tion. We passed the hours of the morning in conversation on many subjects, and I found that my curiosity was doomed to be prolonged. It was not until the after-noon, when the brief November day was already dying, that on a sudden, and with considerable abruptness, Frois-sart rose from the chair where he had been sitting for some time in reflection and desired me to follow him.

I had no need to ask him whither. His voice, his face, his manner, answered me at once more clearly than words. At last the hour was come! Froissart led the way in silence t the dark tower. We reached the stairs—we mounted--

we stood before the door. Froissart inserted the key, the door opened, and

we entered.

The figure I had seen the night be fore was sitting before his checkered table, with the turban, beard, and flowing robe, exactly as I had seen them. On one point, however, I found that I had been mistaken; the eyes of the figure were not fixed, as I had supposed, upon the pieces, but were gazing straight before him. I regarded him with strangely-mingled

sensations of curiosity and awe. The latter feeling I could not entirely account for; I reflected that it was pro-bably a survival of that which I had experienced the previous evening, strengthened by a memory of that strange dream which had disturbed my sleep. Otherwise I saw no cause for agitation. On viewing the figure thus closely and by daylight, I discovered at once that my supposition had been correct. The figure was an artificial construction, a machine in the shape of a man. There was no room for doubt; the beard was stiff and lifeless, the features mask-like, the eyes of glass. It had been merely the effect of distance and ncertain light which had deceived me. I spoke my thoughts aloud.

'It is, then, really an automaton," him inquiringly, not comprehending. "It was so!" I repeated. "And

what, then, is it now?"
"As I have said," he answered, "an automaton it was. What it now is, God knows. Let us be seated, Seldon, and listen to a most strange story. If you find it not altogether incredible, I hall be amazed. And yet of its truth I cannot be less firmly assured than I am of the reality of my own existence.' He paused for a moment, then re

"This figure—this automaton, since I must call it so-was the invention of my old friend Martin Sombras. It was devised, as no doubt you have divined, to play a game of chess with an opponent. Many such figures have been constructed, differing more or less in detail, but all depending for their mode of action upon the presence of some human player carefully concealed either within the figure itself or in a chest upon which the board was placed. Sombras's idea, however, was radically different from these. He conceived the possibility of constructing an automaton which should be really such-that is, such that any move made by its opponent should set in motion a part of its machinery, which would thereupon cause the figure to make the answering move required by the particular combi tion of the game. Impossible as this may seem at first sight the method by which it was accomplished was in reali ty wonderfully simple. Indeed, if you are acquainted with certain devices of somewhat similar nature-Babbage's calculating machine, for example—you will be aware that this is not the only instance in which machinery has been made to accomplish, by most simple combinations, results apparently impossible." I admitted that this was so.

"I need not, then, go into details," continued Froissart, "which are, moreover, unnecessary to my story. I may just mention, however, that the squares of the board are movable and the men are variously weighted. The fact is, the design was never completed. Three months ago, just as it was finished, requiring only a screw or so to be put in. Sombras died, as I have told you. "I must now relate to you more par-

ticularly the manner of his death. was one evening when we were engaged as usual in playing chess. The game was an absorbing one. It was the last of a series which we had been playing in order to test the merits of an opening which Sombras had discovered, and which, with the fondness of a discoverer, he held to be inrincible. For some time I had maintained the contrary; yet, as Sombras beat me game after game, I began to feel shaken in my opinion. At last, however, I believed I had discovered a weakness in his method. That game was to decide it. If I failed this time there could be little doubt that Sombras had hit upon a discovery which

might revolutionize the game.

"We began to play, and it seemed that I had been right. The move I had devised appeared to have broken up the attack—so at least I thought as I sat waiting for Sombras to reply to it. He was already putting out his hand to do so when to my horror he paused, uttered a deep groan, and sank back in his chair—insensible. Perhaps the excitement, the strain of thought, had brought on the attack, which is the

more probable, as his health was at that time perilously feeble. But what-ever was the cause, the result was terribly sure. He was carried to his room; doctors were sent for and ar-rived—too late! Long before ther

me my old friend was dead." Froissart paused and his voice trem bled. I said nothing; and presently

he resumed :
"I have hurried over this part of my story as briefly as possible, for the deep pain of it is with me still. It was by far the saddest moment of my life when I returned from the melancholy duty of following his coffin to the vault to ogether so long. The evening of that day was gloomy and depressing; a low cloud brooded over the country like a cloud brooded over the country has a pall; a fine and steady rain fell defeilly. Melancholy and sick at heart, I reamed aimlessly and in silence through the empty house, regarding in every room the well-remembered tokens of my dead friend. At last my restless wanderings brought me to the tower— to this apartment. It was already dark when I entered it, and I carried in my hand no lamp. "The room, I say, was dark when I

entered it, and I struck a light and kindled the swinging-lamp. As it began to glimmer fitfully, and to throw a doubtful light about the interior, my heart all of a sudden gave a great bound and then seemed to stop beating. I was not alone! Some one was sit ting there in the middle of the room. For some minutes, as the lam; glimmered and spluttered and would not blaze up into a clear flame. I stood there with a shivering feeling. only able to make out that a dark and ilent figure, a mysterious presence, was lamp flamed up brightly and gave forth a clear light. What a delicious sensa-tion of relief I felt! The startling object, on becoming visible, turned out to be nothing more terrible than the automaton, which I had quite forgotten, seated as usual before his little table. " I broke out into a laugh at my own

folly, not without a reflection that my nervous system must certainly be out of order. To think of my being fright-ened by that familiar figure, which I had seen a hundred times, sitting there so tranquilly before his checkered board. The sight of it touched me with a strange sense of the pathetic. I re-membered how it had been for years the occupation and the delight of my old friend to work at it, to calculate for it. to invent for it new movements and mproved details. I knew how it had ome to form at last-this creature of his brain-the interest of his life. He had loved it, as it grew into perfection. as a parent loves an only child. And now he would never watch it play a game, as he had planned; never see the moment on which his heart had been set. And he had died, moreover, leaving unaccomplished the one other ambi-tion of his life—to have linked his name immortally to the game he loved, as the inventor of a new and grand and revo-

utionary opening.
"My thoughts, however, were suddenly diverted into another channel. I was struck with a discovery which puz zled me greatly. The chessmen on the table at which the figure sat were not ranged in order as at the commenc ment of play, but were stationed irregularly about the board, as in the position of an unfinished game. Several pieces on both sides had been taken and lay on the table be-side the board. But what amazed me was the fact that the position of the men on the squares was perfectly fa-miliar to me. I recognized it in an inwas the game in which I and Sombras had last played together, and which had been broken off on account of his

reason-my poor friend had never, I knew well, entered that room after his seizure. Who, then, had placed the "It was so," returned Froissart. men in the position they now occupied? with a curious emphasis. I looked at The more I thought of this matter the more unaccountable it seemed. there could be no doubt of the fact. order to be sure that the positions were indeed identical I examined the board closely, in case I should have been deceived by a partial similarity. But no; the pieces stood man for man as I remembered them. I made seemed to lead up, and what I had intended to play afterward-a move which opened out an exceedingly inter esting and novel combination. The move was possibly unsound, and yet I believed that I had analyzed it correctly. As I now look at the board the whole returned to my mind as clearly as when I first conceived it I found myself repeating in my mind that the only plausible retort on the part of my opponent would be such and such a move—P. to Q. B. 3, as a matter of fact. Half unconsciously I took a seat before the board opposite the automaton, and became gradually quite lost in speculation. At length, in order to consider what the effect of my purposed move would be, I placed my hand on the Queen and played the move I contemplated-Q. to K. 5.

"Instantly the figure on the othside of the table stretched out its hand deliberately over the board and made

the answering move-P. to Q. B. 3. "I will not attempt to describe my amazement. I fell back in my seat and gazed for many minutes in stupefac-tion at the figure of the automaton; nor could I, during that time, had my very life depended on the action, have risen from my seat or uttered a sound. The figure sat there motionless, with its eyes apparently fixed upon the board. Presently, however, finding that I did not move again, it raised its head and fastened ts glassy orbs on mine. There it sat, looking at me with large mild eyes, which now (I am ready to swear to i seemed to be alive. Great Heaven Oh, ancient earth and sky! It must have been my fancy. I thought the face of the figure now bore a strange and dim, yet frightfully distinct resemblance to the features of old Martin Sombras, its dead creator.

"At that sight my blood ran chill and my hair rose up. Had I beheld before me the ghostly presence of Som-bras in his own likeness, I believe I should have still preserved some degree of self-possession. But there was something in this manner of his appearance which shook my very heart. I do not know how long it was before I could collect my faculties sufficiently become conscious of the unreason ness of my fears and the shame of superstitious terrors in an intellectual being. Was not this spirit-if spirit it were-that of my old friend? barm would it do me even if it had the power? Reflecting thus, and summoning up what courage I had left, I made an effort to speak, and this time my voice, though strangely altered, return-

" Sombras,' I said earnestly, though my voice quavered, 'if you are here indeed, though by what mysterious means I know not, speak to me! What would you have me do?'

"The figure was silent; only its eyes

rested intently on the board. ready. Yet, if you have the power of speech, I charge you, by our ancient friendship, speak to me, Sombras!'

"The eyes of the figure burned with strange fire; but it answered not a

... This game so strangely set," said- do you desire to play it? ' "I thought the figure bowed its head, "I thought the figure bowed its beard its eyes were still fixed upon the board it impatient to proceed. I dared make no delay. I trembled, but I no longer hesitated. I knew my move beforehand, and I made it. The right hand of the figure immediately extended itself over the board and made the answering move.
"It was not a move which I had ex-

pected; I was surprised. Strange as it may seem, impossible as it may seem to any but a true disciple of the game. (and to such it will appear natural, and, indeed, inevitable,) in spite of the sensation with which my veins were chill. I became interested, then absorbed. I thought I saw the object of the move, but I was not certain. I did not move without deliberation; but again, as soon as I had played, my opponent, without the hesitation of an instant, stretched forth his hand and moved in his turn. This extreme promptitude surprised me at the time; I did not reflect that I was not playing against flesh and blood. "Moreover, the move itself perplexed

me. I saw that the advantage I had gained was vanishing. I began to trem-ble with excitement, as I had lately trembled with dread. And yet I know I played my very best; my senses seemed to myself extraordinarily acute. The combination which I had devised again appeared irresistible-t stratagem certain of success. had the game within my grasp; thought myself on the point of victory. Suddenly, as my opponent moved a piece, a low sound caused me to look up. The automaton was regarding me with a full gaze; and now, it was unmistakable, the resemblance in its features to those of Martin Sombras was no figment of my bra n. The look was exactly that unmalignant glance of triumph with which my old friend had been accustomed to announce a victory. Involuntarily I cast my eyes down to I saw; I was checkmated!
"For the first time I saw it all.

saw before me the most subtle combination which ever proceeded from a human brain. I believed it to be im possible for any ingenuity to have seen through such a movement: Many times since have I played over the game in solitude, and proved to demonstration that the mate, from the moment we began to play, was inevitable against that evolution, so veiled, so overwhelming. Sombras's theory had, after all, "So deeply was I arbsorbed in won der and admiration that I half forgot the strange antagonist to whom I owe

my defeat. When shall I forget-I never shall forget—the circumstances which recalled me to myself? A slight noise, I know not what, caused me to look up. I raised my eyes and looked again at the figure. As I did so the resemblance which had existed to the face of my old friend suddenly vanished. The eyes sgain became glassy, empty, and devoid of speculation; the life, the move-ment, which had animated the figure died out of it; and there was nothing left before me but mere wood and painted cloth. It was as if I had seen my old friend die twice.

"Up to that moment I had preserved

my faculties, if not from amazement and trepidation, yet from the full sens of an unearthly presence, which now rushed across my spirit in a flood. The excitement which had buoyed me up deserted me. The lifeless eyes of the figure vacantly staring seemed now a thousand times more awful than the previous supernatural life. I could bear no more. Hardly knowing what I did nor whither I was going, I staggered from the room and from the

Again Froissart paused; I thought he had finished his story, but presently he resumed:

"Many days passed before the terors of that night gave way to a calmer if not less solemn feeling. Then a most strange idea took possession of me and left me not a moment's rest or peace of mind. What if the spirit should return? Something persuaded me that it would return; that at some time. which I could not foretell, the mysteeven recollected to what the move I had rious fire would once more kindle in the glassy eyes, the living likeness waken in the vacant features, the startling hand extend itself over the table, and I should play yet another game of chess with my old friend. Reasonable or unreasonable, the persuasion took firm hold of me and possessed, as it still possesses, my whole being. Not a night has passed since then but, under an uncontrollable impulsion, I have taken my seat, never without a thrill of awed expectation before the table, and making the first move, waited for the figure to reply. Hitherto I have waited in vain. night, as the nights before, it did not stir. To-night-it may ! '

CHAPTER III.

As Froissart uttered the last words of his most strange story I will not deny that I shivered, as if with cold. Evening was beginning to fall, and the light of the room was shadowy, haunted. and uncertain. On the other side of the table sat the mysterious figure, motienless, spectral in the twilight, and

looked at us silently with its glassy eyes. We sat in silence. I knew not what to think. Had I not heard the story from Froissart himself I should doubt-less have judged him, as he had said, to be mad or dreaming; it was necessary to have heard him and to have watched him to be sure that he was not And yet there was an alternative; the whole might have been a hallucination. What was there to show that it was not so; that it was not the illusion of a disturbed and excited brain? As if I had put the question aloud, Froissart answered my unspoken thought. "Hallucination?" he said.

think so, naturally-and certainly thought so also the next morning. was then as cool and collected as ever l was in my life, I mean as far as my intellect was concerned, and I was dis posed to laugh at my own wildness of imagination, which had played me such a prank. I easily persuaded myself that I had been, as you suppose, merely the victim of a singular delusion. It told myself that it must be so, and I added that at least I could not prove it otherwise." "Very true," I interposed.

"But as I was thus thinking a sudden thought came into my head. could prove it. I had but to go to the tower and examine the position of the chessmen on the board. If they stood as usual I had been deceived. If "Well?" I said, hastily. "Well,

you went?"

"I went," said Froissart; "I opened the door, laughing at my agitation, re-peating to myself that I should find the pieces drawn up in rank, and there would be an end of the mystery-a proved delusion. I had played, as it happened, with the black men-"

"Well?" I said again.
"The pieces were stationed irregularly about the board. The black king was checkmated." Again, as Froissart spoke, my mind fell back upon itself, foiled and discon-certed. I could not deny the cogency

of his argument, nor could I forget, what he himself knew nothing of, the strangeness of my own sensations in the presence of that mysterious figure.

"Seldon," said Froissart, after time, "I have told you my story. I see that you are shaken. Do you now believe as I am forced to believe, or do

you not?" "I said. "I must." At the same time I started from my seat. "I must, Froissart. But another thing is clear to me—that this figure is likely to kill you before long. If the apparition comes again you will die of shock. If it does not, you will die of tension. Neither shall happen if I can help itof that I am determined. To you Mar-tin Sombras, whether in the flesh or in the spirit, is rightly sacred. To me a living friend is more than a dead stranger or a wandering spectre.

Come!"
With these words I advanced upon the turbaned figure, and before Frois sart could prevent me, or, indeed, beome aware of my intention, I seized it n my ar as and bore it toward the open window.

It was the only window in the castle

which was of modern size, a fact which arose from its having been enlarged for the purpose of giving sufficient light for the working of delicate mechanism. Sheer below it, at an immense depth, lay the lake, gloomy with the coming raised the figure to the lintel and launched it forth into the empty space. It fell like a plummet. I watched it

Heavy internally with brass and iron. it struck the water with amazing force. A cloud of spray flashed upward and the space around it whitened and seethed with violence. Nothing was to e seen except the agitated water. The figure had vanished like a stone.

It was gone-eternally gone, Evil or harmless, earthly or supernal, it was gone, and its mystery with it. Even as I looked the lake resumed its sombre and undisturbed and fathomless lustre. Its waters slept again their sleep o The automaton was buried in their depths-forever.

A few words only need be added. A month has passed since that night, and

Froissart is himself again; though assuredly both to him and to me the recollection of the automaton will re main lastingly connected with the most inexplicable experience of our lives. The "perturbed spirit" of old Martin Sombras may also rest in peace, his life's ambition being attained. His great gambit, so nearly lost, so amazingly revealed, will shortly appear before the world, edited with notes and analysis by Philip Froissart, and will assuredly create among chess circles a paroxysm of excitement, the result of which I will not attempt to prophesy.

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THURSDAYS and SATURDAYS will make connections at NORFOLK with the

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ROANGE, Captain COUCH, SUNDAY, October 11th, at 50 clock A. M., OLD DOMINION, Captain SEITH, TUESDAY, October 13th, at 20 clock P. M., WYANOKE, Captain HULPHERS, FRIDAY, October 18th, at 20 clock P. M., GEORGE W. ALLEN & CO., Agonts, No. 1301 Main street and oc 10 Company's wharf, Rocketts,

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MAND POTOMAC RAILBOAH, Schmide commencing MARCH 1, 1885 - sastern
standard time:
6:80 A. M., leaves Syrd-Street station
daily: stops only at Ashiand,
Junction, Millord, and redericksburg. Sie eper from
Charleston to Washington.
11:07 A. M., leaves Byrd-Street station daily except samilay.
7:15 P. M., leaves Byrd-Street station daily, Sieeper from Jackson ville
to New York.

BAILBOAD LINES

7:16 P. M., leaves signify street station daily. Sieeper from Jacksonville to New York.

10:29 A. M., arrives at Byrd-Street station daily. Sieeper from New York to Jacksonville.

2:39 P. M., arrives at Fyrd-Street station daily. Sieeper from New York to Jacksonville.

2:39 P. M., arrives at Fyrd-Street station daily except street washington to Charleston.

9:42 P. M., arrives at Hyrd-Street station daily except Sunday.

ASHLAND TRAINS.

4:00 P.M., accommodation, leaves Broatstreet station; arrives at Ashland at 5 P. M.

6:04 P. M., leaves Elba; leaves Ashland at 6:44 P. M. leaves Ashland at 6:43 A. M.

7:50 A. M., arrives at Elba; leaves Ashland at 6:43 A. M.

8:55 A. M., accommodation, arrives at Broat-Street station, arrives at Hyrod-Street, station, arrives at Hyrod-Street, station, arrives at Broat-Street, station, arrives at Hyrod-Street, station, arrives at Broat-Street, station, arrives at Broat-Street, station, arrives at Broat-Street, station, layer 8:55 A. M., accommodation. arrives at Broad-Street station; leaves Ashiand at 5 A. M.
5:59 P. M., arrives at Etoa; leaves Ashiand at 5 Li 2 P. M.
C. A. TAYLON, General Ticket Agant, E. T. D. MYERS, General Superintendent

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8:55 P. M. MAIL daily (except Sunday.)
9:55 A. M. ACCOMMODATION daily (except Sunday.)
7:05 A. M. NIGHT EXPRESS daily (except Sunday.) SUNDAY ACCOMMONATION between Richmond and Scottsville leaves Richmond 8:09 A. M.; retorning, arrives at Richmond 7:15 P. M.

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> LEAVE RICHMOND. EAVE RICHMOND.
>
> (Through-Passenger Mail daiity)—For all stations between
> Richmond and Danville, connecting at Greensboro for
> Raleigh, Goldsboro, and points
> on Salem Branch; Fayetteville and all C, F, and Y. V.
> local points, and at Chariotte
> for Columbia and the Southeast; also for Atlanta, New
> Orleans, and Southwest.
>
> Pullman Sleeper, Richmond
> to Greensboro, Danville to Avgusta without change, and
> banville to Selma without
> change.

Banville to Seima without change.

8:25 P. M.—(Through Passenger, daily)—Stops at all stations, connecting at Keysville for all points on Richmond and Mecklenburg milroad (daily except Sunday); at Greensboro for all points on Salem Branch; at Salisburg with W. N. C. railroad; at Atlanta for Jackson ville, Fla., New Orleans, and Southwest.

Fullman Buffet Sleeper, Danville to Atlanta, Goldsboro to Asheville, Danville to Na

Puliman Buffet Sleeper. Danwille to Atlanta. Goldsboro' to
Asheville. Danville to New
Orleans without change.

2:45 P. M.—(York-River Passenger, daily)
Stops at all staffons and conneets at West Point (daily except Sunday) with steamer for
Baitimore and points North.

6:00 P. M.—(Bon-Air Accommodation,
daily except Sanday) for Coalfield.

7:10 A. M.—(York-River Freight-from
Twenty-fourth-Street, depotdaily except Sunday)-for
West Point.

ARRIVE AT RICHMOND.

7:00 A. M.—From Atlanta. Goldsboro'.
Raleigh, and intermediate
points (daily).

8:41 A. M.—From Coalified and Bog Air
(daily except Sunday).

10:15 A. M.—From West Point (daily) Baitimore, and points North (daily
except Monday).

9:45 P. M.—From all local staffons, Atlanta. New Orleans, and Southwest (daily), except Sunday).

west (daily).

8:2 P. M.—Freight (daily except Sunday)
from West Point.
TICKET OFFICES: 1000 Main street, and
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8: A COMPTER M. SLAUGHTER, General Passenger Agent, Sol. HAAS, Traffic Manager. A. L. Rives, General Manager. 19 19 ATLANTIC COAST LINE.

RICHMOND AND PETERSBURG RAIL ROAD TIME-TABLE.
Commencing TUESDAY, August 2, 1885, trains on this road will run as follows: TRAINS SOUTHWARD.

Leave Arrive 6. †7:00 A.M. 9:00 A. M. Mixed train, 48. †10:49A.M. 11:40 A. M. Through train, 34. †11:20A.M. 12:20 P. M. Accom odat n. 40. *2:48 P.M. 8:29 P. M. Fast Mati. 36. †5:00 P.M. 6:09 P. M. Accom odat n. 82. 8:35 A.M. 7:45 A. M. Sund'y Accom. 88. 5:55 P.M. 7:16 P. M. Sund'y Accom.

TRAINS NORTHWARD, No. Petersburg. Richmond. 43. *4:58 A.M. 5:48 A.M. Fast Mail. 33. †6:15 A.M. 9:16 A.M. Accom'odat'n, 35. †12:50 P.M. 1:50 P.M. Accom'odat'n. 47. *5:58 P.M. 6:55 P.M. Throa'n train, 37. 7:00 A.M. 8:10 A.M. Sund'y Accom 39. 4:20 P.M. 5:30 P.M. Sund'y Accom

Daily. †Daily (except Sunday), *Daily. †Daily (except Sunday).

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Nos. 40 and 43 make no stops. Nos. 47 and 46 stop only on signal at Chester, Centralia and Manchester. Nos. 6, 33, 34, 35, and, 36 stop at all stations.

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